



FRIDAY
Clear
49/27



SATURDAY
Partly Cloudy
54/31



SUNDAY
Partly Cloudy
54/32

C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN

Biz Beat



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PHOTO BY KEN MOORE
Folks like Sue Morgan and her family enjoy dramatic features of nearby Oconeechee Mountain.

FLORA BY KEN MOORE

Seven local natural wonders

Recently, D.G. Martin, columnist for The Chapel Hill News, described his list of seven natural wonders in North Carolina. D.G.'s descriptions inspired my thinking about our local natural wonders.

Some of you spend an hour or two each week walking along a favorite woodland trail. I wonder how many of you choose a different trail each week. There are so many great walks close by that my wife, Kathy Buck, and I often have difficulty choosing one.

Sometimes wide-open spaces are appealing; other times, secluded shady coves. There's quiet warmth in stands of green needle-floored pine forests; in contrast is adventure climbing to the heights of giant oak crowned ridges. Special trees beacon, like the twisty old chestnut oaks and mountain laurels of Oconeechee Mountain State Natural Area, the giant oaks of Big Oak Woods of Mason Farm Biological Reserve or the big loblolly pines in the Adams Tract.

Already I've listed three of my favorite local natural areas: #1, Oconeechee Mountain (enrivor.org) overlooking Hillsborough; #2, N.C. Botanical Garden's Mason Farm, south of Finley Golf Course; and #3, Carrboro's Adams Tract, extending from Wilson Park up and over and down through mature pine and oak-hickory-beech-maple forests to Bolin Creek.

Continuing my list of local natural wonders is #4, Carolina North, some 750 acres of diverse woodlands bordering the Bolin Creek corridor with miles of trails maintained by UNC (fac.unc.edu/Carolinanorth).

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Keep Bolin Creek trail natural
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Board gets an earful over crosswalk safety

BY KIRK ROSS
Staff Writer

CARRBORO — Anyone who uses the various crosswalks in downtown Carrboro knows that not all intersections are created equal in the eyes of local motorists.

Pedestrians in the mid-block walkways near Weaver Street Market and on North Greensboro near the Century Center see a little more respect than those trying to use the crosswalks just a stone's throw away.

The uncertainty of whether cars will stop and the ongoing battle of the right-of-way at major intersections were among the concerns raised at Tuesday

night's board of aldermen meeting at Carrboro Town Hall.

Carrboro resident Tom Henry said he and fellow pedestrians he's talked to have had numerous close calls and he'd like to see the town step up enforcement to see that crosswalks and those traveling on foot downtown get a little more respect.

Henry said the crosswalks with the caution paddles in the center of the roadway and crossings that have walk signals tend to be safer. He singled out the crosswalks on Greensboro Street as particularly unsafe.

Henry suggested the town try to work with the state Department of Transportation to outfit more crosswalks with paddles and encourage Carrboro police to ramp up enforcement on speeders and drivers who violate the crosswalk laws.

Virginia Guidry said she would also like to see stronger enforcement.

"It does seem to be a contradiction to me that Carrboro promotes itself as pedestrian friendly and yet the crosswalk laws are not enforced," she said.

Guidry agreed with Henry on the problems with the Greensboro Street crosswalks. She said that at the crosswalk at Shelton Street and Greensboro Street on a busy Saturday there are often angry confrontations between drivers and those trying to cross the street.

"It does seem to be a contradiction to me that Carrboro promotes itself as pedestrian friendly and yet the crosswalk laws are not enforced."

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Food for thought

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro Association of Educators took a handful of young writers and their teachers out to lunch on Wednesday at Elmo's Diner in Carrboro.

The students were selected as winners of the American Education Week Writing Contest, sponsored by the association.

Sylvia Cheeseman, a kindergartner at Glenwood Elementary School, won for her essay about her teacher, Katie Jiang. Elizabeth Yang won for her essay about Gary Falgout, her fifth-grade teacher at Seawell Elementary School. Caroline Liu, a seventh-grader, won for her essay about Jeremy Bellion, who teaches band and orchestra at Smith Middle School. Josie Hollingsworth won for her essay about Robert Johnsen, her civics teacher at Carrboro High School.

Seawell Elementary fifth-grade teacher Gary Falgout (left) shares a laugh with Smith Middle School band and orchestra teacher Jeremy Bellion and student Caroline Liu, who plays flute in the Smith orchestra. Liu said she was inspired to write an essay about Bellion because he keeps the work interesting and class time lively. "He's not boring," she said.

PHOTO BY KIRK ROSS

Hoops fans come to terms with disappointing season

BY BETH MECNUM
Staff Writer

"Three more wins until UNC has 2,000," Woody Durham exclaimed at the Celebration of a Century Alumni Game last Friday night at the Smith Center. Add in that win against N.C. State Saturday night, and now it's two.

That sounds impressive – and Woody certainly said it in a way that made it sound impressive – but you've got to imagine that for the planners of this year-long 100-year celebration of Carolina basketball, 2,000 wins by this point in the season was a foregone conclusion.

That game against College of Charleston was probably already checked in the win column, and at least one more ACC win seemed likely, if not a sure thing.

But players, coaches and fans alike have had to adjust their expectations. It hasn't been easy.

Newspapers are reporting that Deon Thompson won't leave his room and Marcus Ginyard's once-vibrant and positive twitter feed, chock-full of inspirational quotes, has been quiet of late. Roy Williams' unfortunate Haiti comments are fodder for blogs, and even the women's basketball team is unranked for the first time since 2001.

Fans, both young and old, grew accustomed to the Carolina way of at least being competitive year after year, and are now coming to terms with what almost all are calling a disappointing season.

Carrboro Mayor Mark Chilton, a former UNC student, puts things in perspective.

"It's definitely not as bad as Haiti, but it is bad," Chilton said. "When you win the national championship, you're going to get cleaned out by the NBA."

"I still have a lot of confidence in the coach and in the players that we've got. I'm optimistic, but it's not going to be a season we're going to look back and boast about."

Heather Hall, a UNC senior and avid Carolina fan since birth, said she's tried to stay confident all season, but that confidence took a big hit during the Maryland game, when she heard Maryland's fans' shouts of "NIT, NIT."

"I've always loved Carolina basketball and I'm really one of those people who sticks with the team through thick and thin, but this season something feels amiss, something's not right," she said.

That's a common question among UNC fans – what exactly *is* wrong? This year's recruiting class included one of the top five players in the nation, John Henson, and three other All-Americans.

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For art's sake

RECENTLY ...
BY VALARIE SCHWARTZ

Calm usually does not describe an artist at his or her first solo exhibit.

Calm, happy and comfortable can all be applied to Ben Gunter, 27, at his first solo show at Carrboro Town Hall last week. Gunter greeted friends, family and supporters — many who had never seen his work — with hugs, high fives and relaxed smiles. For this young man, support and networks keep him functional.

"Ben was born with tuberous sclerosis," his mother, Kay Gunter, told me. "He was three months old when he had his first seizure." Seizures remain an issue even after brain surgery in 2004.

"It's just a small part of him," Kay said. "He can't drive, but he can do so many things." He assists a coach in training a wrestling team, plays basketball on a team, sings in a choir, is learning to play guitar and has his own lawn-mowing service. "Ben LOVES mowing," Kay Gunter said, "If there were a strip of grass all the way to California, he'd mow it" Kay has been a stay-at-home mom for Ben and his elder sister, Kate, and has become adept at networking to find the best answers, helping Ben live as independently as possible. A business partner in the mowing business does the driving.

Ben told me that his grandmother gave him his first paints. She was an artist, and when he was a child they



would go to the beach together and paint.

Ben loves colors, and when describing a piece of art he starts by naming the colors. When a friend asked what kind of paint he used, Ben answered, "Dark."

His teacher, Maggi Grace, of Carrboro acknowledged that he opts for few pale colors in his palette of ink, tempera and acrylic paints. "He chooses color with absolute certainty. There are no aesthetic norms; the world is open to him, with no reason to resist any notion that he has."

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Transit concepts considered

BY BETH MECNUM
Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL — Chapel Hill Transit will take a hard look at Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for Chapel Hill's two busiest corridors, N.C. 54 and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, as part of the 2035 Long Range Transit Plan.

Both roadway corridors already exceed 3,000 riders a day, qualifying them for consideration for a higher order of transit. That's where BRT comes in.

At Monday night's town council meeting, Chapel Hill Transit director Steve Spade described BRT as, "Taking the concepts of light rail, which is the most efficient way of serving passengers, and adapting them to a less capital-intensive use of rubber-tired vehicles on paved roadways which are either exclusive roadways or mixed traffic."

Essentially, BRT has the benefits of light-rail transit, such as exclusive roadways or high-frequency service, but saves money by not using the rail.

In the town of Carrboro's comments on the same plan, the board of aldermen supported learning more about light-rail usage and making it a higher priority.

Those comments, along with Chapel Hill's, eventually will be reviewed and considered for the 2035 Long Range Transit Plan after the latest round of public hearings.

Spade also presented the short-range transit plan, which he said would be more responsive to changes in transit in comparison with the long-range plan, which he referred to as a "vision."

Carolyn Elfland, UNC's associate vice chancellor for campus services, said the university supports putting less emphasis on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and more on N.C. 54.

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